



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
ALASKA STATE OFFICE
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ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99513-7599
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1600 (931)

Dear Reader:

We are pleased to present the Final Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement for the Northwest National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A). This plan describes a range of management options, including the BLM "Preferred Alternative," for federal lands and oil and gas resources within the 9.4-million-acre Planning Area. Within the 9.4-million-acre Planning Area are 8.8 million acres of federal surface and 9.1 million acres of federal subsurface estate.

This Final Integrated Activity Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement incorporates changes made to the Draft Integrated Activity Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement issued in January of this year. The following is a summary of the more important changes and additions.

- Inclusion of the BLM Preferred Alternative in Chapter 5, along with a discussion of its possible effects on the environment.
- Discussion of why two additional alternatives from the Audubon Society and the North Slope Borough were considered but eliminated from detailed analysis in the plan.
- Minor clarifications to the text, including additional discussion of several area resources, and updated and new information such as that from the Audubon Society, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Research Council's report, *Cumulative Environmental Effects of Oil and Gas Activities on Alaska's North Slope* (2003).
- Analysis of a potential permanent road between the Dalton Highway and Nuiqsut as a reasonably foreseeable activity. The scenario for this road was developed with information from the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.
- Review of specific comments on the draft plan and our responses to those comments. Selected letters are reproduced on CD as Appendix 15 and on the NW NPR-A website.
- Extension of required operating procedures to apply to permitted non-oil and -gas activities in addition to authorized oil and gas activities. Non-oil and -gas activities may include research camps, recreational float trips, or overland travel and associated activities.
- A summary of the analyses of the effectiveness of stipulations and required operating procedures under the Preferred Alternative.

The Preferred Alternative would make all BLM-administered lands within the Northwest NPR-A available for oil and gas leasing; however, leasing would be deferred for 10 years on approximately 1,570,000 acres near the community of Wainwright. In addition, stipulations and required operating procedures (ROP's) would establish clearly defined setbacks, restrictions, and guidance for all aspects of oil- and gas-related operations throughout the Northwest NPR-A.

Some highlights of the protective measures in the Preferred Alternative include:

- Prohibiting placement of permanent facilities on and within 1/4 mile of 254 deep-water lakes protecting 386,000 acres.
- Prohibiting facilities on setbacks from rivers, protecting 969,000 acres.
- To the extent practicable, requiring that permanent support facilities be located at least 3/4 mile inland from the coastline of the Northwest NPR-A, protecting 160,000 acres.
- Allowing oil and gas exploration activities to take place on Dease Inlet, Admiralty Bay, Elson Lagoon, and associated barrier islands, only between October 15 and May 15 of each year.
- Prohibiting permanent oil and gas facilities, except linear facilities such as pipelines, within 3/4 mile seaward of the shoreline of Dease Inlet, Admiralty Bay, Elson Lagoon, and natural islands (excluding barrier islands).
- Identifying multi-year study requirements for eiders and yellow-billed loons in addition to identifying special study areas for brant and caribou where multi-year studies would be required before the authorization of development activities.
- Recommending the 102,000-acre area of Kasegaluk Lagoon for designation as a Special Area and imposing “no-surface-occupancy” stipulations on the lagoon. Geophysical exploration within this Special Area would be allowed, subject to applicable stipulations and ROP’s.

You will find more complete and detailed explanations of these and other protective measures and management decisions within the plan.

As you read this document you may notice slight differences in the way this plan appears when compared to previous BLM plans. In our commitment to improve planning documents we occasionally try innovative or emerging technologies. This print version of the final Northwest NPR-A plan is a product of one such step. As with any prototype, slips in quality control do occasionally surface. In this case, you will find format inconsistencies and awkward spacing throughout the document. While these slight imperfections may be distracting, they have no effect on the content itself. However, we do apologize for any inconvenience they may cause you.

Finally, we appreciate the extensive comments and public discussions that have helped us shape our final plan. As required by the National Environmental Policy Act, we have submitted the plan to the Environmental Protection Agency. We will issue our Record of Decision 30 days from the date the EPA publishes a Notice of Availability for the plan in the *Federal Register*.

If you have questions about this document, please call Curtis Wilson, BLM Alaska State Office at (907) 271-5546, or Mike Kleven, BLM Northern Field Office at (907) 474-2317.

Sincerely,

/S/

Henri R. Bisson
State Director